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Security Council

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## Letter dated 2 November 2016 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

I have the honour to transmit herewith the thirty-seventh monthly report of the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), submitted pursuant to paragraph 12 of Security Council resolution 2118 (2013) (see annex). The report covers the period from 23 September to 22 October 2016.

On the matter of the destruction of chemical weapons production facilities declared by the Syrian Arab Republic, I must again report that no progress has been made. The Director-General's note to the OPCW Executive Council indicates that the poor security situation on the ground still prevents safe access to the remaining hangar and two stationary above-ground facilities by either the Syrian Arab Republic or the OPCW secretariat.

With regard to the initial declaration of the Syrian Arab Republic and subsequent submissions, I reiterate the need for the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic and the OPCW secretariat to work together to resolve all identified gaps, inconsistencies and discrepancies.

Also with regard to the question of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, I note that the Security Council, as communicated by the President of the Council in his letter dated 21 September 2016 addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2016/807), approved a short-term extension of the mandate of the OPCW-United Nations Joint Investigative Mechanism, until 31 October 2016. This extension had been requested by the Mechanism in order to complete its fourth report to the Security Council pursuant to Council resolution 2235 (2015) (S/2016/806). The fourth report of the Mechanism was submitted on 21 October 2016.

The use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic is a matter of grave concern. I am alarmed by the weakening taboo against the use of such weapons and by the possibility of their use becoming normalized in this or any conflict, present or future. In order to avoid this intolerable outcome and to ensure that there is no impunity, it is imperative that those responsible for the use of chemical weapons should be held accountable. I look forward to the deliberations by the Security Council on this report.

(*Signed*) **BAN** Ki-moon

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## Annex

### Letter dated 25 October 2016 from the Director-General of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons addressed to the Secretary-General

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

I have the honour to transmit to you my report entitled "Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme", prepared in accordance with the relevant provisions of OPCW Executive Council Decision EC-M-33/DEC.1 and United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), both dated 27 September 2013, for transmission to the Security Council (see enclosure). My report covers the period from 23 September to 22 October 2016 and also covers the reporting requirements of Executive Council decision EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013.

(*Signed*) Ahmet **Üzümcü**

## Enclosure

[Original: Arabic, Chinese, English, French, Russian and Spanish]

### Note by the Director-General

### Progress in the elimination of the Syrian chemical weapons programme

1. In accordance with subparagraph 2(f) of the decision by the Executive Council (hereinafter "the Council") at its Thirty-Third Meeting (EC-M-33/DEC.1, dated 27 September 2013), the Technical Secretariat (hereinafter "the Secretariat") is to report to the Council on a monthly basis regarding the implementation of that decision. In accordance with paragraph 12 of United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013), the report by the Secretariat is also to be submitted to the Security Council through the Secretary-General.

2. The Council, at its Thirty-Fourth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Detailed Requirements for the Destruction of Syrian Chemical Weapons and Syrian Chemical Weapons Production Facilities" (EC-M-34/DEC.1, dated 15 November 2013). In paragraph 22 of that decision, the Council decided that the Secretariat should report on its implementation "in conjunction with its reporting required by subparagraph 2(f) of Council decision EC-M-33/DEC.1".

3. The Council, at its Forty-Eighth Meeting, adopted a decision entitled "Reports of the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria" (EC-M-48/DEC.1, dated 4 February 2015) noting the Director-General's intent to include reports of the OPCW Fact Finding Mission (FFM) in Syria, along with information on the Council's discussion thereof, as part of the monthly reporting pursuant to United Nations Security Council resolution 2118 (2013). Similarly, the Council, at its Eighty-First Session, adopted a decision entitled "Report by the Director-General Regarding the Declaration and Related Submissions by the Syrian Arab Republic" (EC-81/DEC.4, dated 23 March 2016), noting the Director General's intent to provide information on the implementation of that decision.

4. This, the thirty-seventh monthly report, is therefore submitted in accordance with the aforementioned Council decisions, and includes information relevant to the period from 23 September to 22 October 2016.

#### Progress achieved by the Syrian Arab Republic in meeting the requirements of Executive Council decisions EC-M-33/DEC.1 and EC-M-34/DEC.1

5. Progress by the Syrian Arab Republic is as follows:

(a) The Secretariat has verified the destruction of 24 of the 27 chemical weapons production facilities (CWPFs) declared by the Syrian Arab Republic. However, the poor security situation continues to preclude safe access both for the Syrian Arab Republic to destroy the remaining aircraft hangar, which stands ready to accept the explosive charges, and for the Secretariat to confirm the condition of the two stationary above ground facilities. The planned annual routine maintenance of the remote monitoring systems, which are installed at four of the five destroyed underground structures, was carried out by the contracted company at the end of

September 2016. One of the systems that had been experiencing communications issues was repaired by representatives of the Secretariat on 2 October 2016. As part of the agreed yearly verification activities, Secretariat representatives are scheduled to visit the five destroyed underground structures at the end of November 2016 to monitor the integrity of the interior plugs.

(b) On 18 October 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic submitted to the Council its thirty fifth monthly report (EC-84/P/NAT.1, dated 19 October 2016) regarding activities on its territory related to the destruction of its CWPFs, as required by paragraph 19 of EC M 34/DEC.1.

**Progress in the elimination of Syrian chemical weapons by States Parties hosting destruction activities**

6. As reported previously, all of the chemicals declared by the Syrian Arab Republic that were removed from its territory in 2014 have now been destroyed.

**Activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to Executive Council decision EC-81/DEC.4**

7. As reported previously, the Secretariat and the Syrian Arab Republic have exchanged a number of communications in an effort to make progress in clarifying the outstanding issues with regard to the Syrian Arab Republic's declaration.

8. On 29 September 2016, the Director-General replied to the letter dated 30 August 2016 from the Head of the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic, in which the Syrian Arab Republic expressed a willingness to continue engagement on outstanding issues and provided partial replies to some of the questions addressed to it by the Declaration Assessment Team (DAT). In his letter, the Director-General explained that the new information did not substantively contribute to resolving the identified issues and, once again, called upon the Syrian Arab Republic to provide scientifically and technically plausible explanations on all outstanding issues, and to substantiate recently given information by providing original documentation and by making its senior officials involved in its chemical weapons programme available for meetings with the DAT. The Director-General also urged the Syrian Arab Republic to declare all relevant parts of the Scientific Studies and Research Centre (SSRC) under Articles III and VI of the Convention, to provide answers to all outstanding questions (including the presence of indicators of the previously undeclared chemical warfare agents), and to submit the outstanding redacted versions of the amendments to the initial declaration, as agreed during the April to June 2016 rounds of consultations.

9. In a letter dated 10 October 2016, the Syrian Arab Republic provided some additional responses to the Secretariat's questions and, in a letter dated 13 October 2016, it declared certain parts of the SSRC under Article III of the Convention. The Secretariat is currently reviewing the information and the amendment received. Pending this review, the Secretariat will provide its response to the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Other activities carried out by the Secretariat with respect to the Syrian Arab Republic**

10. The Steering Committee, which is comprised of representatives from the OPCW, the United Nations Office for Project Services (UNOPS), and the Syrian

Arab Republic, discussed, inter alia, amending the tripartite agreement, during its meeting in Beirut held on 28 and 29 September 2016. Amendments to the agreements to extend until the end of May 2017 the support provided by UNOPS to the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic are expected to be concluded soon.

11. As requested by the Council at its Seventy Fifth Session (paragraph 7.12 of EC-75/2, dated 7 March 2014), the Secretariat, on behalf of the Director-General, has continued to brief States Parties in The Hague on its activities.

12. As at the cut-off date of this report, one OPCW staff member was deployed as part of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Supplementary resources**

13. As previously reported, a Trust Fund for Syria Missions was established in November 2015 to support the FFM and other remaining activities, such as those of the DAT. As at the cut-off date of this report, contribution agreements totalling EUR 7.8 million had been concluded with Canada, Chile, Finland, France, Germany, Monaco, New Zealand, the Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, the United States of America, and the European Union. Pledges from other donors have been made and are currently being processed.

**Activities carried out with respect to the OPCW Fact-Finding Mission in Syria**

14. Guided by Council decisions EC M 48/DEC.1 and EC-M-50/DEC.1 (dated 23 November 2015), as well as by United Nations Security Council resolution 2209 (2015), the FFM continued to study all available information relating to allegations of use of chemical weapons in the Syrian Arab Republic, with a particular focus on widely reported incidents in Saraqib (Idlib Governorate), and three incidents in Aleppo, Zubdiya, and Al Sukkari (Aleppo Governorate). The intensity of the ongoing conflict in Aleppo is a major challenge to the work of the FFM, which is reviewing and analysing pertinent information from all accessible sources.

15. In response to the request from the Syrian Arab Republic (letter dated 15 August 2016) for the FFM to investigate an alleged use of chemical weapons on 2 August 2016 in the area of Al-Awamid in Aleppo, a team was redeployed to Damascus from 12 to 19 October 2016 and conducted 25 interviews. The FFM will continue to work with the National Authority of the Syrian Arab Republic to gather more information.

16. On 13 October 2016, the Director-General provided an update with regard to the FFM's work to the Eighty-Third Session of the Council.

**Conclusion**

17. The main focus of the future activities of the OPCW Mission in the Syrian Arab Republic will continue to be on the implementation of Council decision EC 81/DEC.4 regarding declaration-related issues and on the activities of the FFM, as well as on the destruction and verification of the remaining aircraft hangar, confirmation of the status of the two stationary above ground facilities, and annual inspections of the underground structures already verified as destroyed.